



Wisconsin State Senate

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**COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND CORRECTIONS
JULY 11, 2007 – PUBLIC HEARING
SENATE BILL 193**

Madam Chairwoman and members of the Judiciary and Corrections Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today on Senate Bill 193, which would increase penalties for first and second drunk driving offenses.

Last August my constituent, Michael Havn, was killed by an individual whose blood alcohol was nearly three times the legal limit. It was the driver's first OWI offense.

Working with Michael's cousin, Shawn Quirk, and Kari Kinnard of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, we came up with a proposal to crack down on the increasing number of first and second time drunk drivers.

Under current law, individuals who are convicted of a third, fourth, fifth or subsequent violation related to driving while intoxicated are subject to increased fines and terms of imprisonment. For example, if a person had an alcohol concentration of 0.17 to 0.199, the fine is doubled. If the alcohol concentration is 0.20 to 0.249 the fine is tripled and if it's at or above 0.25 the fine is quadrupled.

Senate Bill 193 extends to first and second offenses the enhanced penalty current law applies to third and subsequent offenses for having a high blood alcohol concentration while operating a motor vehicle.

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You will note that these levels are approximately twice the intoxicated blood alcohol level .08; nearly three times .08 and over three times .08. It is not coincidence that some have called these levels "very drunk driving", "very, very drunk driving" and "very, very, very drunk driving."

Unfortunately, we need to do everything we can to protect citizens from these dangerous drivers. These are not social drinkers who weren't sure they were impaired. They are folks who are definitely impaired and know – or should know – not to get behind the wheel. No excuses...no slap on the wrist because they had never been caught before.

I am pleased that my proposal has strong bipartisan support in both the Senate and the Assembly. I'll be happy to address any questions you may have.

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